

Early literacy activities in the home

Participating in literacy activities with family members provides valuable developmental experiences for young children. In addition to developing an interest in reading, children who are read to or told stories and who visit the library may start school better prepared to learn. Engaging young children in literacy activities at home also provides parents and family members with the opportunity to become actively involved in their children's education at an early age.

- In 1995, more than 80 percent of children aged 3–5 were read to or told a story in the past week by a parent or family member, while 41 percent had visited a library in the past month. The percentage of children who participated in these literacy activities increased between 1991 and 1995.
- In 1995, children aged 3–5 who were not enrolled in preprimary education were as likely to have been told a story at home at least once in the past week as those 3- to 5-year-olds who were enrolled in center-based programs or kindergarten. However, children aged 3–5 who were not enrolled in preprimary education were less likely to have visited a library in the past month than children who were enrolled in center-based programs or kindergarten.
- White children aged 3–5 were more likely to have been read to or told a story in the past week than their black and Hispanic counterparts. In addition, white children were more likely to have visited a library in the past month than their black and Hispanic peers.
- There was a positive relationship between the education level of parents and their children's participation in early literacy activities: As parents' education level increased, so did their children's participation rates in early literacy activities.

Percentage of children aged 3–5 who participated in various literacy activities with a parent or family member, by selected characteristics: 1991 and 1995

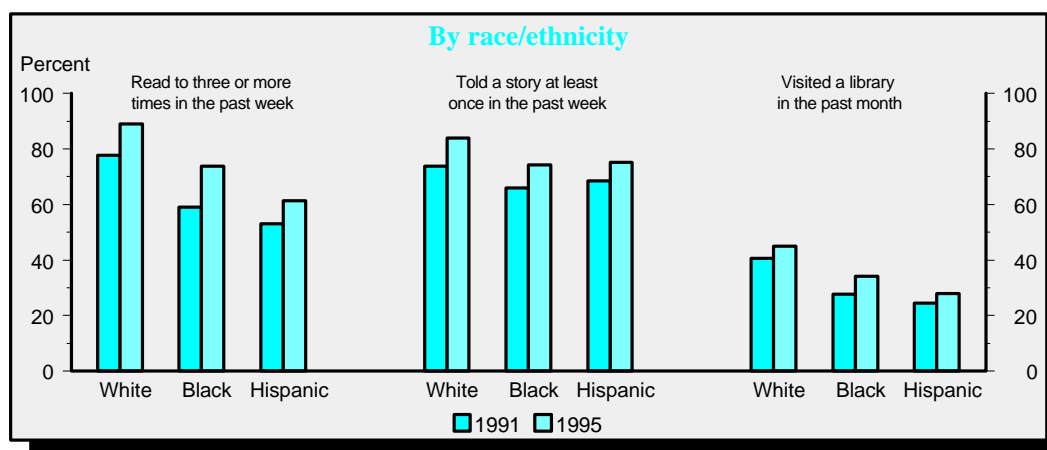
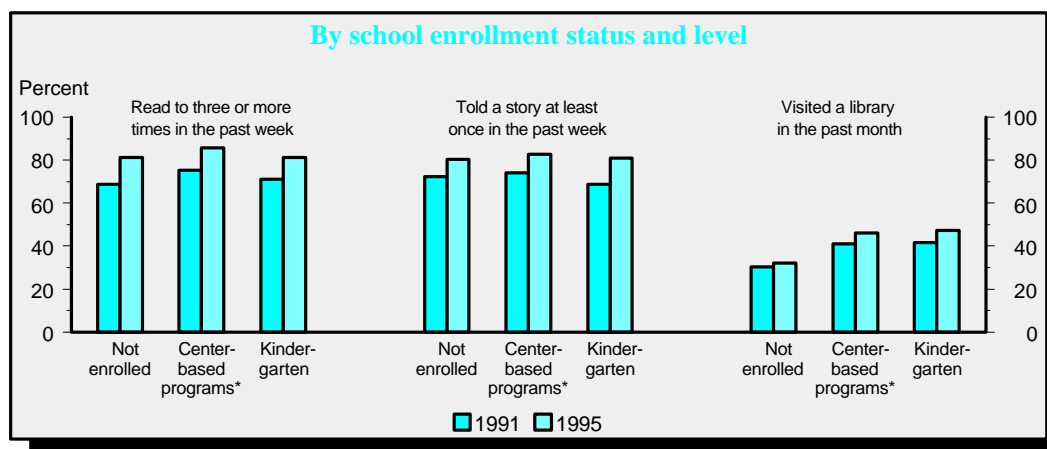
Selected characteristics	Read to three or more times in the past week		Told a story at least once in the past week		Visited a library in the past month	
	1991	1995	1991	1995	1991	1995
Total	71.4	83.1	72.0	81.4	36.6	41.2
School enrollment status and level						
Not enrolled	68.8	81.5	72.3	80.3	30.5	32.0
Center-based programs*	75.2	85.8	74.1	82.7	41.0	46.3
Kindergarten	71.1	81.3	68.8	81.0	41.7	47.3
Race/ethnicity						
White	77.7	89.0	73.8	83.9	40.7	45.1
Black	59.0	73.7	66.0	74.4	27.8	34.1
Hispanic	53.0	61.5	68.4	75.1	24.5	28.0
Parents' highest education level						
Less than high school diploma	53.8	64.4	67.4	71.9	18.3	18.3
High school diploma or GED	63.5	77.9	68.2	77.6	26.0	31.5
Some college/vocational/technical	74.0	85.3	74.2	82.9	38.5	40.9
Bachelor's degree	82.1	89.7	74.7	85.0	52.0	53.5
Graduate/professional school	88.3	94.0	78.4	88.2	59.1	62.8

* Center-based programs include nursery, prekindergarten, and Head Start programs.

NOTE: Included in the total but not shown separately are children from other racial/ethnic groups. This analysis includes children aged 3–5 who were not enrolled in first grade.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey (NHES), 1991 (Early Childhood Education File) and 1995 (Early Childhood Program Participation File).

Percentage of children aged 3–5 who participated in various literacy activities with a parent or family member: 1991 and 1995



* Center-based programs include nursery, prekindergarten, and Head Start programs.

NOTE: Included in the total but not shown separately are children from other racial/ethnic groups. This analysis includes children aged 3–5 who were not enrolled in first grade.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey (NHES), 1991 (Early Childhood Education File) and 1995 (Early Childhood Program Participation File).

Table 2-1 Percentage of children aged 3–5 who participated in various literacy activities with a parent or family member, by selected characteristics: 1991 and 1995

Selected characteristics	Read to three or more times in the past week		Told a story at least once in the past week		Visited a library in the past month	
	1991	1995	1991	1995	1991	1995
Total	71.4	83.1	72.0	81.4	36.6	41.2
Child's age ¹						
Age 3	72.7	83.1	74.3	81.5	31.2	34.9
Age 4	71.9	84.4	72.3	81.5	37.4	42.2
Age 5	69.6	81.7	69.5	81.0	41.3	46.6
School enrollment status and level						
Not enrolled	68.8	81.5	72.3	80.3	30.5	32.0
Center-based programs ²	75.2	85.8	74.1	82.7	41.0	46.3
Kindergarten	71.1	81.3	68.8	81.0	41.7	47.3
Race/ethnicity						
White	77.7	89.0	73.8	83.9	40.7	45.1
Black	59.0	73.7	66.0	74.4	27.8	34.1
Hispanic	53.0	61.5	68.4	75.1	24.5	28.0
Urbanicity						
Urbanized area	(³)	81.5	(³)	80.4	(³)	42.0
Not an urbanized area	(³)	85.0	(³)	83.0	(³)	43.5
Rural	(³)	86.4	(³)	83.1	(³)	37.9
Household income						
\$10,000 or less	(³)	73.8	(³)	76.2	(³)	28.4
10,001–20,000	(³)	76.0	(³)	78.0	(³)	30.8
20,001–30,000	(³)	82.3	(³)	82.1	(³)	40.7
30,001–40,000	(³)	84.1	(³)	78.8	(³)	43.5
40,001–50,000	(³)	86.6	(³)	85.3	(³)	42.6
50,001 or more	(³)	92.1	(³)	86.1	(³)	54.2
Parents' highest education level						
Less than high school diploma	53.8	64.4	67.4	71.9	18.3	18.3
High school diploma or GED	63.5	77.9	68.2	77.6	26.0	31.5
Some college/vocational/technical	74.0	85.3	74.2	82.9	38.5	40.9
Bachelor's degree	82.1	89.7	74.7	85.0	52.0	53.5
Graduate/professional school	88.3	94.0	78.4	88.2	59.1	62.8
Family structure						
Two biological or adoptive parents	—	85.6	—	82.8	—	45.9
One biological or adoptive parent	—	77.8	—	78.6	—	32.4
One biological and one step parent	—	75.1	—	79.1	—	32.2
Other relatives	—	85.5	—	79.1	—	15.8

— Not available.

¹ Age as of December 31, 1990 for 1991 data, and as of December 31, 1994 for 1995 data.

² Center-based programs include nursery, prekindergarten, and Head Start programs.

³ Urbanicity and family income data for 1991 were not comparable to data for 1995.

NOTE: This analysis includes children aged 3–5 who were not enrolled in first grade. Included in the total but not shown separately are children from other racial/ethnic groups.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey (NHES), 1991 (Early Childhood Education File) and 1995 (Early Childhood Program Participation File).

Table S2 Standard errors for the text table in *Indicator 2*

Selected characteristics	Read to three or more times in the past week		Told a story at least once in the past week		Visited a library in the past month	
	1991	1995	1991	1995	1991	1995
Total	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.9
School enrollment status and level						
Not enrolled	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.2	0.9	1.3
Center-based programs	1.3	1.0	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.1
Kindergarten	1.3	1.1	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.5
Race/ethnicity						
White	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.9	1.1
Black	2.0	1.9	2.1	2.5	1.8	2.3
Hispanic	2.8	2.0	2.1	1.7	1.8	1.7
Parents' highest education level						
Less than high school diploma	2.4	3.0	2.4	2.8	2.0	2.2
High school diploma or GED	1.4	1.3	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.7
Some college/vocational/technical	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.2	0.8	1.9
Bachelor's degree	1.4	1.3	1.9	1.7	1.9	2.1
Graduate/professional school	1.1	1.2	1.6	1.5	2.3	2.2

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey (NHES), 1991 (Early Childhood Education File) and 1995 (Early Childhood Program Participation File).

Table S2-1 Standard errors table for 2-1

Selected characteristics	Read to three or more times in the past week		Told a story at least once in the past week		Visited a library in the past month	
	1991	1995	1991	1995	1991	1995
Total	0.7	0.6	1.3	0.7	0.7	0.9
Child's age						
Age 3	0.9	1.0	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.4
Age 4	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.5
Age 5	1.3	1.0	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.5
Enrollment status and level						
Not enrolled	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.2	0.9	1.3
Center-based programs	1.3	1.0	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.1
Kindergarten	1.3	1.1	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.5
Race/ethnicity						
White	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.9	1.1
Black	2.0	1.9	2.1	2.5	1.8	2.3
Hispanic	2.8	2.0	2.1	1.7	1.8	1.7
Urbanicity						
Urbanized area	—	0.8	—	0.8	—	1.1
Not an urbanized area	—	2.1	—	1.9	—	2.4
Rural	—	1.4	—	1.7	—	1.7
Household income						
\$10,000 or less	—	1.9	—	2.1	—	2.3
10,001–20,000	—	1.9	—	1.7	—	2.2
20,001–30,000	—	1.7	—	1.8	—	1.6
30,001–40,000	—	1.7	—	2.0	—	2.5
40,001–50,000	—	1.9	—	2.2	—	2.7
50,001 or more	—	1.1	—	1.3	—	1.8
Parents' highest education level						
Less than high school diploma	2.4	3.0	2.4	2.8	2.0	2.2
High school diploma or GED	1.4	1.3	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.7
Some college/vocational/technical	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.2	0.8	1.9
Bachelor's degree	1.4	1.3	1.9	1.7	1.9	2.1
Graduate/professional school	1.1	1.2	1.6	1.5	2.3	2.2
Family structure						
Two biological or adoptive parents	—	0.7	—	0.7	—	1.1
One biological or adoptive parent	—	1.4	—	1.7	—	2.0
One biological and one step parent	—	3.2	—	3.2	—	3.9
Other relatives	—	3.6	—	5.5	—	3.7

— Not available.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey (NHES), 1991 (Early Childhood Education File) and 1995 (Early Childhood Program Participation File).

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Graduate/professional school	88.3	94.0	78.4	88.2	59.1	62.8

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